



Frequently Asked Questions About Autism Spectrum Disorder

1

What is autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), more commonly known as autism, is a developmental disability that is characterized by diminished social communication and social learning, repetitive behaviors, and obsessive interests. Previously, there were different labels for what is now known as the “autism spectrum” (e.g., Asperger’s syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder), which shows a broad range of severity and symptoms. People who have ASD are often said to “have autism” or “be on the spectrum.”

2

What are symptoms of ASD?

As mentioned, there is a wide range of symptoms attributable to an ASD diagnosis. Common symptoms include (but are not limited to):

diminished interest in social relationships, obsessive interests, repetitive motor behaviors (hand flapping, jumping, pacing), speech or communication delays, inability to tolerate changes to their environment or routine, ritualized behaviors (e.g., lining toys up, arranging items in a certain way), lowered frustration tolerance, tantrums, aggression, hitting oneself, social withdrawal (e.g. “being in their own world”), loss of previously learned skills

ASD is known as a spectrum disorder. Each individual will display the core deficits, but those deficits may be manifested in different ways.

3

What causes ASD?

In short, researchers aren’t sure. There appears to be a number of genetic factors that may play a role in developing ASD as well as certain environmental factors, but there is still much to learn about the causes of ASD. Most likely, it is a culmination of many factors, not a single cause.

It is important to note that the controversy surrounding childhood vaccinations and the development of ASD is not well founded. The research that produced this idea has been reviewed extensively and, ultimately, retracted due to the use of poor scientific design and unethical behavior on the part of the researcher.

4

How is ASD diagnosed?

ASD can be diagnosed by a psychologist or a medical doctor. Regardless of which professional you see, they will run a series of tests to determine whether the individual meets the criteria for ASD. These tests will include interviews with primary caregivers, skill assessments, and other established measures designed to identify if an individual qualifies for a diagnosis of ASD. These assessments may be done in one visit or over a series of visits, depending on the opinion of the diagnosing professional. At the end of the process, the professional will deliver to you a written report, discuss their findings with you, and include recommendations for how you may proceed.

5

Can ASD be cured?

Unfortunately, there is no cure for ASD. However, ABA treatment has been proven to be a very successful treatment for individuals on the spectrum. Many children who receive ABA therapy see a significant reduction in the severity of symptoms and go on to lead full and fulfilling lives.

6

What is Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Therapy?

ABA therapy is the most commonly prescribed treatment after an individual receives a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The goal of ABA Therapy is to help a child build skills & reduce maladaptive (or unwanted) behaviors.

ABA helps children who aren't thriving in their current settings by using techniques proven to increase your child's motivation and improve skills like speech, cooperation, taking turns, making friends, motor skills, hygiene, personal safety, and more.

In addition to skill building, ABA can minimize behaviors that inhibit learning, or are otherwise inappropriate. We focus on reducing rates of unwanted behavior while teaching the child to use more appropriate means to get their needs met.



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